

## ChLA 2013 Conference *Play and Risk in Children's and Young Adult Literature*

Biloxi, MS (USA), 13–16 June 2013

The 40<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the Children's Literature Association (ChLA), hosted by the University of Southern Mississippi (USM), took place from 13 to 16 June 2013 at the IP Resort in Biloxi, Mississippi. Organized in collaboration with the ChLA, the USM Department of English, the USM de Grummond Children's Literature Collection at McCain Library and the USM University Libraries, the conference encompassed 14 concurrent sessions involving 80 panels with presentations from over 250 international scholars.

The central topic of this year's ChLA conference was play and risk, as these two notions have been interconnected with children's literature as both a literary and scholarly endeavour from its very beginnings. Ever present as a theme in many classic and contemporary works of children's and young adult (YA) literature, play and risk have proven to be very relevant concepts in the risky venture of constructing a scholarly discipline around a literary field once considered to be mere children's entertainment (or rather, 'children's play').

The papers presented covered a wide array of topics, ranging from semiotic studies of children's literature classics in terms of risk and play, and intriguing analyses of the rising global popularity of YA dystopian literature and its socio-political context, all the way to gripping debates on the common pitfalls in building an academic career in children's literature. This thoroughly engaging and thought-provoking exchange of ideas took place in the very appropriate setting (both playful and risky) of the IP's onsite casino.

The conference marked a very significant milestone for academic studies in Croatian children's literature, considering that the International Committee of one of the world's oldest and most renowned children's literature associations decided to choose Croatia as the special country-focus panel of its big 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. Three Croatian scholars who had the honour to present recent academic research in the field of Croatian children's literature to a wide international audience were awarded international sponsorship grants. The panel *Croatian Children's Literature* was chaired by Professor Marek Oziewicz from the University of Wrocław (currently employed at the University of Minnesota).

The paper "Croatian Children's Literature on the Verge of a New Period" by Berislav Majhut provided an overview of the history of Croatian children's literature and the theoretical efforts of its understanding. Instead of providing a list of authors and works, Majhut gave an overview of publishing activities and reading practices in Croatian children's literature. The paper presented recent developments in the field and the influences of the country's relatively recent transition from communism to democracy in the broader ex-Yugoslav context. At the same time, the paper stressed the importance of the traumatic experiences brought about by the Homeland War that are specific only to Croatia. The author concluded the presentation by highlighting the importance of interinstitutional networking, which can be achieved by making Croatian academic journals accessible to a wider international research community.

The paper "Glimpses into Contacts between Croatian and Anglo-American Children's Literature through Translations" by Smiljana Narančić Kovač gave a historical overview

of the Anglo-American literature offered to Croatian children and YA audiences, while also presenting translations of Croatian children's literature into English from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards. After observing recent developments, the author found that contemporary Anglo-American literature is nowadays promptly translated and made readily available to Croatian children, while Croatian literature is still rarely translated into English. The paper explains the wider contexts and circumstances that influenced the developments depicted.

The paper "Love and Death in Croatian Children's Literature" by Željka Flegar discussed the legacy of the legendary Croatian author Ivan Kušan by observing his Koko crime series, which initiated the development of modern Croatian children's literature with the publication of the novel *The Mystery of Green Hill* (1956) and which was marked by a turn towards postmodernism in the metafictional novel *Love or Death* (1987). The author believes that, due to the fact that *Love or Death* brings together a very important part of Kušan's collected works, as well as various aspects of writing for children pertaining to the target audience, modernity and narrative structure, this work of fiction allows for an overview of trends, genres and crucial turning points in Croatian children's literature, and is a valuable contribution not only to its domestic culture, but to children's literature in general.

In addition to the above-mentioned scholars, two other members of the Croatian delegation had the opportunity to present papers on Croatian literature as part of the panel with a somewhat wider scope, notably *Mapping Text and Translation in Slavic Children's Literature*, chaired by Professor Marina Balina of the Illinois Wesleyan University.

The paper "It's a Kind of Magic: Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić's *Croatian Tales of Long Ago* – English Translations of a Central Piece of Slavic Children's Literature in Print and Multimedia" by Martina Jurić focused on a collection of stories that earned its author comparisons to H.C. Andersen and J.R.R. Tolkien and put a part of the Croatian national heritage on the shelves of many homes throughout the world. The paper analyzed and contrasted the two translations of Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić's stories (one by Fanny Susan Copeland, first published in 1924, and the other by Vlatko Broz from the 2002-2006 multimedia version) and their rendering of culture-specific items. It determined how the translators brought a part of the historical tradition of a small Slavic nation closer to the English-speaking reader in two very different historical contexts. Specifically, it identified the strategies employed by the translators and discussed their motives for choosing domestication or foreignization.

The paper "History Employed by the Present: The Case of the 1930s – Representation after 1945" by Sanja Lovrić focused on the representation of the 1930s in Croatian children's literature in the period after 1945 as an example of how the extraliterary and historical context can affect the establishment of a canon and literary memory. The study focused mainly on the exploration of different actions and motifs aimed at 'adjusting' history to the needs of the post-war period. Given that at that point in time the cultural and literary memory of pre-war history was still very much alive, a newly constructed canon highlighted only a small part of the history and only a minor section of the literary works bearing importance for the dominant post-war perspective.

These two panels were preceded by a multimedia presentation on Croatian history and culture prepared by the members of the Croatian delegation that attracted a number

of interested international scholars and provided the setting for the follow-up session. All of the papers received very favourable reviews and sparked debate. The Croatian team also managed to establish a book and information stand at the conference that attracted considerable interest from the participants. The materials provided by Croatian publishers of children's books and by authors of children's literature criticism were afterwards donated to the de Grummond Children's Literature collection. On the final day of the conference, a number of participants had the opportunity to visit the aforementioned library and enjoy a behind-the-scenes tour of the closed stacks and rare manuscripts.

The banquet held on the final day of the panels concluded the great celebration of 40 years of study of children's literature under the auspices of the ChLA. Of course, awards were also presented, with Gaye Hıçyılmaz, author of *The Frozen Waterfall*, winning the Phoenix Award, and Kevin Henkes being presented with the Phoenix Picture Book Award for his work *Owen*. The Phoenix Picture Book Honor Award winner Denise Fleming was recognized for her work *In the Small, Small Pond*. Jerry Griswold, Professor Emeritus at San Diego State University, delivered the Francelia Butler lecture and John Cech, Professor of English at the University of Florida, received the Anne Devereaux Jordan Award for Outstanding Achievement in Children's Literature.

The ChLA 2013 conference gathered a large number of internationally renowned children's literature scholars and provided a much needed platform for an exchange of new findings in the field and for the establishment of an international network of experts. Participation at the conference was both a great honour and challenge for the members of the Croatian delegation, and they once again proved that Croatia is an academic force to be reckoned with. The next ChLA conference *Diverging Diversities: Plurality in Children's and Young Adult Literature Then and Now* will be held from 19 to 21 June 2014 at the University of South Carolina, Columbia.

Martina Jurić

## Tomislav Torjanac u Galeriji Klovićevi dvori

Zagreb, 19. studenoga 2013. – 12. siječnja 2014.

Među mnogobrojnim zagrebačkim izložbama mogli smo prisustvovati dugo očekivanoj, samostalnoj izložbi Tomislava Torjanca u Galeriji Klovićevih dvora, koja je trajala od 19. studenoga 2013. do 15. prosinca 2013. godine. Jedna je od svakako nezaobilaznih izložaba koja je, zbog zaslužno velikog interesa publike, produžena do 12. siječnja 2014. godine. Takvim produženjem može se pohvaliti tek mali broj hrvatskih umjetnika. U izložbu uvode riječi uglednoga australskoga ilustratora i autora slikovnica i dječjih knjiga, Shauna Tana: „Svi dobri radovi govore sami za sebe, na svoj nenametljiv način, stoga je najbolji uvod jednostavno reći: dobrodošli u svijet Tomislava Torjanca, nadamo se da ćete uživati!“

Tomislav Torjanac jedan je od trenutačno najznačajnijih hrvatskih, ali i svjetskih ilustratora mlađe generacije. Po zvanju grafički dizajner, usmjerio se prema ilustraciji i slikarstvu, s istančanom sklonošću slikarskom izrazu, okarakteriziranom snažnim i vidljivo bogatim debljim i tanjim namazima kista, tako kreirajući kompleksno sazdanu formu.